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H.B. 6015: AN ACT CONCERNING ACCESS TO ORIGINAL BIRTH CERTIFICATES BY
ADULT

ADOPTED PERSONS.
Planning and Development Committee

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The question on whether an adoptee should have access to their medical records and birth certificate shouldn't even be a question. Every citizen should have rights to records that are essentially their own. However, if obtaining those records are means that potentially hurt or put in danger the birthmother of the adoptee then maybe we should be asking what is the real cost.

Many women who choose or had to have a closed adoption did so for various reasons including being ashamed of their decision, unavailable resources, or the need to be safe from abusers or family members who could have been dangerous to them or their newborn. There are an array of reasons why a woman places their child and why they have a closed adoption. Nevertheless, these women were promised that placing their child for adoption, rather than terminating their pregnancy or raising a child they weren't ready or safely could, they would have protection.

This bill essentially removes that original promise from a birthmother without setting up any protections for a birthmother to receive emotional and mental resources. Furthermore, it makes birthmothers who are survivors of physical and emotional abuse vulnerable. Choosing adoption is not something that is openly talked about because of the stigmas that historically are still attached to a woman choosing to "give up" their baby. Just because a woman placed a child 20, 30, 40 years ago doesn't mean they still don't have pain and untreated trauma from their decision. I think there's a dangerous risk of mental health issues that will be neglected if we pursue a bill that supports the release of these records without a foundation of support for these birthmothers.

If we allow free access to adoptees to their birth certificates, how will birthmothers' identities continually be protected? Are birthmothers being informed of this release? Do birthmothers also have support (physical, emotional, mental) in this process?

I know the importance of adoptees to have access to their medical records and I am not against that. However, I also know the seriousness of confidentiality and the needed protection for birthmothers. The only consistent thing in a birthmother's most selfless decision was they would have protection of their identity. So I ask, how do we not take that away from them?